

## HEART DISEASE

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Heart disease is the third most common chronic disease in terms of prevalence. Heart disease affects both men and women and it causes about 610,000 deaths in the United States each year.

### Risk Factors

Heart disease is a preventable chronic condition. There are many factors that contribute to heart disease. Most factors are behavioral and can be prevented. Those who have diabetes, are overweight, eat a poor diet, are physically inactive, and drink alcohol excessively are more at risk for heart disease than others. However, by practicing healthy behaviors such as eating a balanced diet, being physically active, and limiting alcohol consumption, one can greatly decrease his or her risk of heart disease.

### Women & Heart Disease

Heart disease is the number one cause of death for women and kills more women than breast cancer. Only 1 in 31 American women dies from breast cancer while 1 in 3 dies from heart disease. Many women do not feel threatened by it, even though about 90 percent of women have one or more chronic illnesses that may contribute to heart disease.

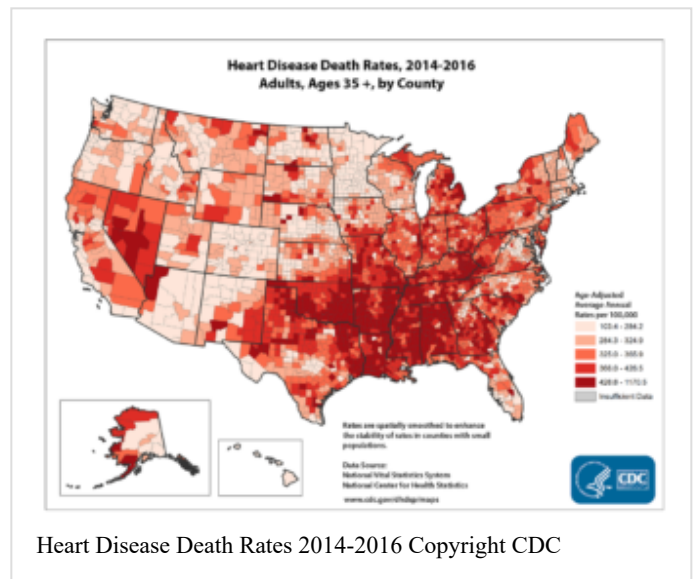
### Geography & Heart Disease

Those living in the South and some parts of the West in the United States have a higher risk of heart disease. Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma have the highest number of heart disease death rates. Southern states eat many fried foods, which is a part of the poor diet that contributes to heart disease. Also, young children across the country are consuming snacks high in fat and sodium, and this behavior continues into adulthood.

### Types of Heart Disease

There are several different types of heart disease depending on what part of the body it affects. One type of heart disease is called atherosclerotic disease and this type of disease is in one's blood vessels. The blood vessels become narrowed or blocked, which prevents blood flow to certain parts of the body. Another type of heart disease can be caused by abnormal heartbeats, also known as heart arrhythmias. In this case, a person's heart may beat too fast, too slowly, or irregularly. The heart muscle itself can also become extremely weak. This type of disease is referred to as dilated cardiomyopathy. A fourth type of heart disease occurs when one or more of the heart's valves is not working properly.

There are four valves total that open and close to allow blood flow throughout the heart.



## Signs & Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of heart disease may include, but are not limited to, chest pain, shortness of breath, numbness, a racing heart, dizziness, swelling in the hands, feet, or ankles and fainting. Sometimes, there are no symptoms of heart disease. This is why it is important to attend regular checkups with a cardiologist.

### Sources:

1. "Heart Disease Facts." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015. Web. 18 Aug. 2016.
2. "Heart Disease Facts." The Heart Foundation. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Aug. 2016.
3. "Heart Disease." Symptoms. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Aug. 2016.

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